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ABSTRACT

Focusing on content area reading in elementary education, this annotated bibliography contains references to 29 articles and papers in the ERIC database, dating from 1987 to 1989. The citations include articles discussing content area reading research, reading material selection, and teaching strategies for content area reading at the elementary level. (MM)

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Content Area Reading in Elementary Education

by Mary Morgan

FAST Bib No. 24 RCS

Although the narrative style of basal readers is generally the focus of reading in the early grades, as students progress through elementary school this emphasis shifts to include informational and expository text – content area reading in social studies, English literature, mathematics, and science (Gray, 1988). Research indicates that students need explicit preparation for this shift, since content area textbooks tend to be more difficult than basals. This ERIC *FAST Bib* focuses on research and teaching strategies for content area reading at the elementary level.

Following an overview section, research on content area reading instruction and students' reading difficulties in the content areas are addressed. The next section provides citations on content area reading material selection, including guidelines for selection as well as annotated bibliographies for content area books. The final section concerns teaching strategies for content area reading at the elementary level, including suggestions for adapting basal instruction to improve content area reading, and teaching reading in mathematics.

Abstracts for some of the articles cited here have been abbreviated to conform to the *FAST Bib* format. The ED numbers for sources included in *Resources in Education* have been included to enable the user to go directly to microfiche collections, to order from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS), or to go to *RIE* for the full abstract on those sources not available through EDRS. A few of the most current references on this list have not yet been assigned an ED number. If a document has a CS number rather than an ED number, look in *RIE* or the ERIC database to find the corresponding ED number. To order from EDRS, the ED number must be provided. The citations to journals are from the *Current Index to Journals in Education*, and these articles can be acquired most economically from library collections or through interlibrary loans. Reprint services are also available from University Microfilms International (UMI) and from the Original Article Tearsheet Service (OATS) of the Institute for Scientific Information.

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Overview

Armbruster, Bonnie B. *Why Some Children Have Trouble Reading Content Area Textbooks. Technical Report No. 432.* Univ. of Illinois, Center for the Study of Reading, Urbana, IL, 1988. [CS 009 390]

Discusses three major reasons why children who can decode the stories in their basal readers may still have problems reading content area textbooks. The reasons include: 1) lack of prerequisite knowledge (including content, discourse, and strategic knowledge); 2) poorly written textbooks; and 3) negative classroom experiences in reading in the content areas.

Gray, Mary Jane. "The Reader in Transition," *Clearing House*, v61 n5 p217-20 Jan 1988.

Notes that in the fourth grade, readers begin a transitional period where emphasis shifts from experiential reading to include informational and expository material. Discusses reading in the different content areas – English, history, mathematics, and science – and asserts that teachers should spend more time preparing students to read in these formats.

Lumpkin, Donavon, ed.; and others. *The Dilemmas of Teaching Reading. Eighth Yearbook of The American Reading Forum.* American Reading Forum, 1988. [CS 009 401]

Articles in this eighth yearbook of the American Reading Forum address the dilemmas of teaching reading. Includes "Reading and Writing as Tools for Independent Learning: The Content Area Classroom at the Crossroads" by K. Ford.

Manolakes, George. "Comprehension: A Personal Experience in Content Area Reading," *Reading Teacher*, v42 n3 p200-02 Dec 1988.

Describes how an excerpt from an electronics magazine challenged the author to examine problems in reading comprehension. Notes the sources of difficulty in understanding demanding text, and states that prior knowledge – not isolated comprehension skills – is necessary to create meaning from a text.

Whysall, Roger. "Reading for Information in the Primary School," *Reading*, v21 n3 p169-77 Nov 1987.

Criticizes the "project" approach to reading instruction, where beginning reading students are supposed to learn the skills it takes to find out information for themselves by reading from sources. Points out that a large number of ill-defined skills which are not taught explicitly are required to sucessfully complete a project.

Research

Alvermann, Donna E.; Swafford, Jeanne. "Do Content Area Strategies Have a Research Base?" *Journal of Reading*, v32 n5 p388-94 Feb 1989.

Examines the extent to which reading research supports the comprehension and vocabulary strategies recommended in content reading methods texts. Concludes that more of the research finds the strategies to be effective than finds them ineffective.

CS009582

Crismore, Avon G.; Hill, Kennedy T. *The Interaction of Metadiscourse and Anxiety in Determining Children's Learning of Social Studies Textbook Materials. Technical Report No. 435.* Univ. of Illinois, Center for the Study of Reading, Urbana, IL, 1988. [CS 211 582]

Examines the role of metadiscourse characteristics and level of sixth-grade students' anxiety as they affect learning from social studies textbooks. Finds that high anxious students showed their best performance with first person voice and no attitudinal metadiscourse while low anxious students showed the opposite effect.

Davey, Beth. "How Do Classroom Teachers Use Their Textbooks?" *Journal of Reading, v31 n4 p340-45 Jan 1988.*

Provides results of a survey of how 90 elementary and secondary teachers used their content area and English textbooks. Reports that both elementary and secondary teachers use textbooks primarily to supplement instruction, but that secondary content area teachers could benefit from inservice education to assist in flexible use of textbooks.

Gee, Thomas C.; Forester, Nora. "Moving Reading Instruction beyond the Reading Classroom," *Journal of Reading,* v31 n6 p505-11 Mar 1988.

Reports on a teacher survey designed to 1) determine the extent to which reading instruction is being offered beyond the reading classroom; and 2) explain why some programs fail and some succeed. Suggests four steps to follow to develop a successful program.

Irvin, Judith L.; Connors, Neila A. "Reading Instruction in Middle Level Schools: Results of a U.S. Survey," *Journal of Reading,* v32 n4 p306-11 Jan 1989.

Reports on a survey of 72 "recognized" middle schools and 83 randomly chosen schools, which indicates that most schools require reading instruction, especially in grade 6. Finds that many offer remedial programs, but that practice has not responded to theoreticians' advocacy for reading in content areas.

Readence, John E.; Baldwin, R. Scott, eds. *Dialogues in Literacy Research. Thirty-Seventh Yearbook of the National Reading Conference.* Proceedings of the 37th Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference, 1987. 382 p. [CS 009 381]

Contains 33 articles from the proceedings of the thirty-seventh National Reading Conference, covering the politics of literacy, emergent and early literacy, vocabulary, comprehension, content area reading, writing, and teacher effectiveness. Contains articles on sixth graders' use of mnemonic imagery in recalling content material, and on the development of teacher explanations during content reading lessons.

Schmidt, Cynthia Maher; and others. "But I Read the Chapter Twice," *Journal of Reading,* v32 n5 p428-33 Feb 1989.

Describes specific problems that students encounter when they begin the transition into content area studies. Examines a recent research summary on study skills for suggestions about how to address these problems.

Stewart, Roger A.; O'Brien, David G. "Resistance to Content Area Reading: A Focus on Preservice Teachers," *Journal of Reading,* v32 n5 p396-401 Feb 1989.

Surveys preservice teachers' attitudes toward content area reading. Concludes that although misconceptions about content reading instruction are prevalent among preservice teachers entering a content area reading course, research showed that most students no longer exhibited those misconceptions when they left the course.

Content Area Reading Material Selection

Bohning, Gerry; Radencich, Marguerite. "Informational Action Books: A Curriculum Resource for Science and Social Studies," *Journal of Reading,* v32 n5 p434-39 Feb 1989.

Presents the origins of action books, selection guidelines for use in the classroom, advantages and limitations, and an annotated list of science and social studies action books.

Webre, Elizabeth C. *Content-Area-Related Books Recommended by Children: An Annotated Bibliography Selected from "Children's Choice" 1975-1988.* [CS 009 514]

This categorized 121-item annotated bibliography should prove useful to teachers in each of the content areas. The books listed are children's choices and are guaranteed to be informational and entertaining as students study math, health, science, social studies, and the language arts.

Teaching Strategies

Alvermann, Donna E. "Adapting Basal Instruction to Improve Content Area Reading," *Reading Horizons,* v29 n2 p129-38 Win 1989.

Suggests ways to adapt basal reading instruction to content area reading instruction. Includes adaptations of three common basal procedures: 1) setting the purpose; 2) developing a vocabulary; and 3) discussing the selection.

Brownson, Jean. "Using Knowledge To Build Knowledge: The Thematic Approach to Content Reading," North Dakota Univ., Center for Teaching and Learning, Grand Forks, ND, 1988. 11 p. [ED 292 628] (Also in *Insights,* v20 n7 Apr 1988.)

Presents a themed approach to content area reading that builds the learner's background for the text by giving real experiences which capture the child's interest in learning, facilitate independence in learning and active involvement, and provide well written texts. Suggests a variety of materials and activities to develop skills, strategies, and interest in reading, including charts, poems, recipes, and games.

Butzow, John; Butzow, Carol. "Make Science Livelier with Children's Fiction," *Learning,* v16 n7 p50-53 Mar 1988.

Suggests ways in which to use literature to teach science, with examples given of reading materials for teaching about spiders and eyeglasses. Lists selected books about seasons, nature, and other scientific themes.

Carr, Eileen; and others. "Using Cloze for Inference Training with Expository Text," *Reading Teacher,* v42 n6 p380-85 Feb 1989.

Describes the Inferential Training Technique (ITT), a modified cloze procedure and self-monitoring checklist focusing on the inferential process. Notes that this strategy improves reading comprehension and inferencing skills, and can be applied to content area reading. Provides a sample cloze passage, inferential questions, and worksheet guide for the ITT.

Culyer, Richard C. "Reading and Mathematics Go Hand in Hand," *Reading Improvement,* v25 n3 p189-95 Fall 1988.

Suggests that math and reading are related, and that strategies common to reading sometimes can be applied in math. Presents instructional strategies and independent study techniques for five areas: basic sight words; vocabulary meanings; other specialized vocabulary; basic skills; and problem solving.

Devine, Thomas G. *Teaching Reading in the Elementary School: From Theory to Practice.* Allyn and Bacon, Inc., Boston, MA. 363 p. [CS 009 499]

The purpose of this book on reading instruction in the elementary school is twofold: 1) to share with colleagues some of the significant works of research and theory that suggest answers to important questions in reading instruction; and 2) to describe specific teaching strategies implied by these answers. Chapter Six discusses reading in the content areas.

Lewis, Harold E., Jr. "Narrowing the 'Method' Gap," *Adolescence*, v22 n85 p115-17 Spr 1987.

Suggests that teachers should approach the content areas using a total lesson approach by adapting the directed reading activity method to content area instruction. Includes a brief discussion of the adaptation of the directed reading activity method and an explanation of each of the six steps as they might apply to the content area.

Spiegel, Dixie Lee. "Using Adolescent Literature in Social Studies and Science," *Educational Horizons*, v65 n4 p162-64 Sum 1987.

Provides suggestions for using literature to supplement content area study, particularly in social studies and science. Emphasizes literature for grades five through eight.

Moore, David W.; and others. *Prereading Activities for Content Area Reading and Learning*. Second Edition. International Reading Association, Newark, DE, 1989. [CS 009 395]

Intended to be a practical guide to prereading activities applicable in the classroom, this book emphasizes students' independence by shifting the focus of instruction to student-centered applications. Chapters of the book cover such topics as: 1) preparing students to read in the content areas; 2) asking and answering questions before reading; 3) forecasting passages; 4) understanding vocabulary; 5) graphically representing information; and 6) writing before reading. Each chapter contains a statement of purpose and a list of teaching strategies.

O'Bruba, William S. "Reading through the Creative Arts," *Reading Horizons*, v27 n3 p170-77 Apr 1987.

Describes four major areas of creative arts that can be used in the reading classroom to enrich and enhance the reading program: music, graphic arts, puppetry, and poetry.

Phelps, Stephen; Smith, Lawrence L. "Microcomputer Applications for Content Area Vocabulary," *Reading Horizons*, v29 n2 p103-09 Win 1989.

Describes the use of microcomputers to enhance vocabulary instruction in content teaching. Reviews the types of software available.

Santa, Carol M.; and others. "Changing Content Instruction through Action Research," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n4 p434-38 Jan 1987.

Discusses ways to get teachers involved in the process of evaluating and changing their methods of instruction—using the example of teaching content material through round robin reading and discussion.

Valaitis, Mirga. "Teaching Critical Reading in the Content Areas. Techniques," 1988. 4 p. [ED 294 034] (Also in *Lifelong Learning*, v11 n7 p28-30 May 1988.)

Discusses challenges in teaching critical reading in the content areas. Presents an effective method for teaching critical reading which emphasizes preparation for and guidance during reading rather than postreading activities.

Zipperer, Anita. "Using Content-Oriented Materials to Fill the Gaps in Students' Knowledge," *Wisconsin State Reading Association Journal*, v31 n2 p45-48 Win 1987.

Suggests that many reading problems may be caused by insufficient background knowledge rather than lack of reading skills. Provides suggestions about how teachers can integrate concepts and materials from social studies into their reading lessons to build students' background knowledge.

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